

THE ABOLITIONIST



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LENINIST LIBERTARIANISM VS. CLASSICAL "ANARCHIST" UTOPIANISM

by Steve Halbrook

Jefferson: "god forbid that we should ever be for 20 years without a rebellion..."

It is as common among anarchists today as it was a century ago to babble about how we are going to abolish the State while never offering any decent analysis of how the hell we are going to do it. The tendency has always been to make vague generalities and to shout ambiguous, shallow slogans without being bothered with constructing a full revolutionary theory which includes concrete statement of goals and viable strategy by which to achieve them. "Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement," in Lenin's phrase.

Probably the greatest failing of classical anarchism was that it asserted that, without organization of any kind in the process, the whole people would rise up spontaneously, abolish the State overnight, and zap!-- everyone immediately becomes a pacifist. No need to worry about defense of the Revolution, for all suddenly lose the statist mentality. To be sure, some (such as Malatesta) mentioned rather in passing that "the people" would remain armed, thereby setting up a "dictatorship" of the masses over power freaks and economic classes behind them who attempted to reinstate politicians and ruling classes; but the trend was clearly not to investigate this immense factor further but instead to rest content with gargling silly slogans.

Lenin's polemic against classical utopian anarchism in State and Revolution is particularly useful to the modern scientific anarchist. "That, together with the abolition of classes (read: ruling and bureaucratic classes), the state will also be abolished, Marxism has always thought. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state" in the Anti-Duhring does not blame the Anarchists for being in favor of the abolition of the state, but for preaching that the state can be abolished "within twenty-four hours". Marx "fought, not against the theory of the disappearance of the state when classes disappear, or of its abolition when classes have been abolished, but against the proposition that the workers should deny themselves the use of arms, the use of organized force, that is, the use of the state, for the purpose of 'breaking down the resistance of the bourgeoisie'." Lenin quotes Engels as writing to Bebel: "As long as the proletariat (for our purposes, read: "All oppressed classes") needs the state, it needs it not in the interests of the (oppressor's) freedom, but for the purpose of crushing its antagonists (i.e. People's freedom); and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom (that is, when all power freaks and ruling classes grabbing for power are mopped up), then the state, as such, ceases to exist. We would, therefore, suggest that everywhere the word 'state' be replaced by 'community'." Elsewhere Lenin wrote that the expropriators would be expropriated and so forth "not by a state of bureaucrats, but by a state of armed workers". For Lenin, "centralism" meant what it did to Makhno later: "The new state machinery admits centralism as much as the old; but it will be based on "complete destruction" of the centralized state apparatus--the army, police, bureaucracy"

What should be clear to every libertarian by now? This should be clear and undisputable: we fully concur in Lenin's critique of classical utopian "anarchism" and we fully accept Lenin's libertarian model. From the above quotes it is obvious that by "state" Lenin meant something quite different from the phenomenon we object to; to us, the State, the enemy, is a centralized monopoly whose chief characteristic is to initiate force against the masses for the purpose of enriching the State privileged small elite of Money Bags freaks, the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, to Lenin "state" coincides with what the modern anarchist would tab "voluntary organization": a voluntary defensive organization by which those who initiate force are repelled, which consists of the whole community and which gathers its strength from the armed masses. Further, this voluntary organization would exist only

so long as is necessary, for "while the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state." While there are important points wherein the libertarian may not fully concur with Lenin, it is all too clear that we are one with him on the crucial question of the "state."

But the naive classical utopian "anarchist" mentality still prevades the ranks of modern libertarians (especially those who have never read anything about Lenin!), and I have no doubt that the abhorrence will be of such babble--"admitted, anarchists have not been successful, but neither was Lenin; did not he only create a new state?"

No, he did not. With some exceptions, Lenin must be considered not as a power freak but as one of the most important libertarians of the century.

Instance One: the really crucial test of whether one was a libertarian in those days concerned whether one was a war mongering patriot or an anti-imperialist. Where were the good old classical "anarchists" then? Our friends Peter Kropotkin and Benjamin R. Tucker were fervently endorsing the most unanarchistic phenomenon this century has been plagued with; world war; they not only cheered the Western imperialists but also had the gall to support conscription of the masses to provide the cannon fodder for the slaughter pits. On the other hand, Lenin and the Bolsheviks-- unlike the other "workers" in Germany, Britain, and elsewhere-- exposed the war for what it really was (cf. Lenin, Imperialism) and did something about it: unlike the pig Kerensky, who reopened the Eastern front, they followed today's slogan "End the War Now!" Thus Brest-Litovsk.

Instance Two: in the area of economics, Lenin once more distinguished himself as one of the great libertarians of our age. What Emma Goldman admitted and complained about on this point is not only revealing as to how much of a libertarian Lenin was but also as to how much Emma wasn't. On two counts she was favorable: first there was the point that injustice should be ended as quickly as possible, that property should be redistributed as it would be naturally in a free society. Hence in her early essay "The Truth About the Bolsheviks" (1917) Emma wrote:

"The Russian Revolution is a miracle in more than one respect. Among other extraordinary paradoxes it presents the Phenomenon of the Marxian Social Democrats, Lenin and Trotsky, adopting Anarchist revolutionary tactics, while the Anarchists Kropotkin, Tcherkessov, Tschalkovsky are denying these tactics and falling into Marxian reasoning, which they all their lives repudiated as "German metaphysics." ... The Bolsheviks of 1917 no longer believe in the predestined function of the bourgeoisie. They have been swept forward on the waves of the Revolution to the point of view held by the Anarchists since Bakunin, namely, that once the Masses become conscious of their economic power, they make their own history and need not be bound by traditions and processes of a dead past which, like secret treaties, are made at a round table and are not dictated by life itself."

Hence the Bolsheviks adopted the anarchistic policy of robbing the robbers "come October!" Emma admits: "the Bolsheviks had adopted the Anarchist slogan, 'The factories to the workers, and the land to the peasants,' and thereby won the sympathies of the Anarchists." (My Disillusionment In Russia, 1925). The sweeping land reform and divesting of the Old State privileged factory owners made a good libertarian start. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized.

Unfortunately a period of State planning followed, due to the continuing Western imperialist aggression--the Allies invaded Russia as well as financed the White counter-revolution, thereby necessitating in some leaders' minds authoritarian War Communism, due to the still existing czarist bureaucracy (see below), and due to the fact that the planners had not yet learned their lesson that the market is the best planner. In the meantime, as every libertarian still must deplore, came the suppression of the Makhnovstchina and Kronstadt.

It was not long however before Lenin once more gave the Revolution a libertarian turn. The New Economic Policy set up one of the most free markets the world has ever known: unlike elsewhere, trade was largely unrestricted and the means of production in the hands of the masses in their capacity as individuals. In one of his last essays Lenin made clear such a free market, together with other voluntary institutions as cooperatives, was how he understood the "socialist" ideal. In fact, his only quarrel with the NEP was that cooperatives were not emphasized enough: "We went too far in introducing the NEP, not in that we attached too much importance to the principle of free industry and trade; we went too far in introducing the NEP in that we forgot to think about cooperatives." ("On Cooperation").

PEACE
NOW

THE ABOLITIONIST is published by members of the radical libertarian alliance monthly; subscriptions are two fiats (\$2.00) per year; letters are welcomed; publishing collective: John Brotschol, Ralph Fucetola, Ken Brown, Walter Block, Steve Halbrook and Bill Baumgarth.

LETTERS

Dear Friends,

Regarding the upcoming anti-election campaign, I think that the emphasis should be on the enlightenment of our liberal "political activists". All their bullshitting around; i.e., getting excited over the 18-year-old vote, supporting candidates for public office, lobbying, and "working within the system" reflects their faith in democratic Amerika. This must be shaken. (A) The farce of voting could be demonstrated by the formation of absurd political parties (involving caricatures of all party politicians & structure), combined with leafletting and posters (see Guy Fawkes for Parliament in June 13 FREEDOM). (B) As for direct action in November, how about sabotaging voting machines & generally disrupting the orderly process of voting? I hope that THE ABOLITIONIST and rla can get something together for the fall in these respects. In my opinion your paper, with its Wobblies and Yippiels is the only really decent anti-Statist sheet around, so keep it up....Fraternally, Geoffrey Hall

Gentlemen,

I am writing to rectify an error in the May edition of THE ABOLITIONIST. In your article concerning the recent state Yaf convention, you quoted me as saying "Yaf must be destroyed for it has completely sold out individual rights to the state steamroller and for this, it must be added to the troops of our enemy, the silent majority." Really now, isn't that statement a contradiction in itself? And do you honestly believe that anyone who believes in individualism could make such a statement? No one should be destroyed until he begins destroying ("Kaiser Kannerin" is hardly capable!!) Everyone has the right to his own philosophies, regardless of how perverted they may be. And certainly, I do not consider the silent majority, "the enemy". Yes it is impeding the progress of those seeking freedom, but it is definitely no more dangerous than those who seek to "smash" the state and replace it with an equally coercive system.

The basic policies of THE ABOLITIONIST are, themselves, quite perplexing. You are against "the state"--great! Your inconsistencies lie in what you condone. I think that you should re-evaluate your so-called libertarian philosophies before you publish under your present banner head. Your collectivistic attitudes completely contradict your stated stand for individualism. Stop trying to please "the masses" (that's a political trick, remember?) Cut the political wheeling and dealing and take a stand for what you believe in. Or, if you choose to continue playing "government games", please remember...NOT WITH MY LIFE YOU DON'T

Kathy Greene, NJLA

Dear Miss Greene,

Let me respond to your charges one by one. First, I apologize for partially misquoting you in the May edition of this newsletter. However, you did say, "Yaf must be destroyed" and although you might have some second thoughts, I do not. This does not mean murdering Yaf's leadership (torturing will be adequate punishment--ha! ha!) as you imply, but by showing this organization's glaring contradictions to high school students and others. These contradictions include the endorsement of an immoral war in Southeast Asia waged by draftees; their lobbying in congress for the impeachment of supreme court justice, William O. Douglass, a great civil libertarian; and open support of the racist governments of Rhodesia and South Africa. And the list grows as this organization "favoring" individual freedom regularly calls for more money in congressional hearings for the Pentagon & the CIA, so they can continue their foreign exploits and make the world safe for United Fruit, Anaconda, Chase Manhattan, General Motors etc. Need us not forget, Yaf is one of J. Edgar Hoover's staunchest supporters in the government's surveillance of its citizens. So much for freedom.

I find your statements on the silent majority perplexing. Certainly, millions of free swinging hard hats, truck drivers, pencil pushing white collar workers & sexually repressed housewives are more of a threat to liberty than RYM II, Progressive Labor and the Young Socialist Alliance. Let me also point out that the authoritarians in the New Left are now laughed at and totally dismissed (I am a little tired of hearing this shit about the activist Left coming from Right-wing libertarians who are nothing more

than monday morning quarterbacks who can only dream (you listening Phil?).

With regard to your assault on the policies of THE ABOLITIONIST, we believe in voluntary association, don't you? And Ken Brown or Jerry Rubin's support of an anti-private property commune or Ralph Fucetola's endorsement (in LIBERTARIAN CONNECTION #11) of worker control of industry without the use of force should not be inconsistent with your laissez-faire capitalist society.

Peace with Liberation,

John Brotschol

Red Guard slogan: to rebel is justified!

TSAO FAN YU LI

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Bill Baumgarth

The contributors to this journal claim to be libertarians, more emphatically, radical libertarians. What distinguishes us from right-wing libertarians? Most of us agree with these comrades in terms of economics, for at heart we are laissez-faire liberals. But our libertarianism is driven past the accepted borders of discussion of both the Chicago school and most of the Austrian scholars not only by our economic deductions, but also by our morality of extreme voluntarism, for we are, after all, anarchists. But it is not enough to appreciate the beauty of competing protection agencies to qualify as an effective or even intelligent advocate of liberty. To deal with concrete facts, with the tasks arising from an honest attachment to libertarianism, requires questions to be raised regarding the nature of our friends, of our enemies, of the means most effective to win freedom in our lifetime (any other goal is not worthy of our efforts; besides, even pessimists agree that one must always ask for more than one might expect to attain). There are questions of history. Neglect of this study has led some comrades, as in the case of Southeast Asia, to strengthen both the myth of state protection and the illusion of the righteousness of US state-capitalist foreign policy. Much worse than the ideological barriers protecting our rulers thus erected, the a-historical libertarian adds to the objective strength of the state in terms of arms, taxes and the subjugation of foreign colonies via fascist oligarchical "friends" whose rule is different from US direct rule only in degree. History, for example, reveals the injustice of the confiscation of land belonging to Arabs by the "freeworld" backed state of Isreal; as it reveals the dealings of "free enterprise" corporations in securing the destruction of competition by "progressive" regulations and control of American domestic and foreign policy.

Our tasks ahead include the finding of our identity--we should thus investigate the history of native American individualist anarchism & the nature of the isolationist Old Right. Since we seem to be indebted to both, research into possible connections between these two movements might be most informative. A scholarly libertarian journal would be an asset to such an endeavor. A yearly Libertarian Scholars Conference could bring together senior & junior faculty and graduate students for the purpose of clarifying ideological issues: patents and copyrights, Randianism, communalism, children's and animal's rights etc. As a movement, we also need affinity groups and anarchist organizations: a proliferation of anarchist activist, writers, artists or research collectives on campus and in the community. The existence of hundreds of radicals, identifying themselves as rla, without the presence of a centralized organization presages a genuine student-based, flexible youth contingent. We need tacticians for community organizing, based perhaps on a strategy of the New Working Class--graphically portraying the separation of students, the middle class, the poor and minorities from the fruits of their labor via taxation, inflation and conscription-powered military adventurism. Our tactics must be relevant to the conditions of both the constituency we must appeal to and ourselves as the organizers, for unless our radicalism is enjoyable, it will soon perish in the stale pessimism of defeatism. Ultimately, a political "party" may arise as a result of our labors, one which aims not to get candidates into office (there are enough "radicals" on that power trip), but by its uncompromising pose, to raise

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issues and educate the electorate to the idea of anarchy.

In short, that marvelous unplanned division of labor that struggles for existence under a state-imposed "order" must also guide the work of revolutionary libertarians, scholars and activists alike. Not only is "doing your own thing" the most satisfying way of effecting change, it is also the most efficient. No one tactic or method will suffice, whether it be the concept of academic libertarianism, revolutionary base-building, or the vulgar concept of "buying and selling freedom" through the essentially sound policy of alternate institutions. What is to be done is to give encouragement to each to do what he considers satisfying, to clarify our ideology without excommunicating heresy, to relate to our own bases without slighting either the straight outlook of the tax-burdened middle class, the common-sense of the plundered manual laborer, or the hedonistic youth culture of the "freaks".

a pig is a pig is a pig
Ralph Fucetola III
SI "Running Dog" HayaKawa,
the State's man at Frisco St.
Col. testified before the
President's Commission on
Student Unrest that "bright
students have been the prin-
iple troublemakers..." SI
has a cure for the unrest:
all students, male & female,
should undergo compulsory
national service at 18 for
2 years; they'll come out,
the man says, with a sense of
purpose--one can guess their
purpose; hope their aim is
good!!!

HayaKawa has become one of
the conservative New Right's
chief luminaries, though all
his positions are strictly
liberal/fascist. How will
Barry Goldwater etc respond
to "national service"? Has
the political New Right tot-
ally sold-out its individ-
ualistic, anti-statist Old
Right heritage to "Our Enemy,
the State"? Yes, after all,
the WFBjr, speaking ex cath-
edra, has declared, "The
state is a divine institution"

We know what our ancestors
would do--we too will take up
the gun if it must be and
pledge out lives, fortunes &
sacred honor--UP AGAINST THE
WALL, HOLY STATE!!!!



THE REVOLUTION?

Ken Brown

In response to Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, students on many college campuses are up in arms--well, not really! Surely this would have been the expected reaction from a group that had peacefully struggled for so long against the USA's actions in Southeast Asia and had seen this peace-ful struggle result in no change in "their" government's policies, only further aggression. All of the demonstrating and politiking had apparently been in vain!

But, with that unbeatable determination and idealistic zeal which refused to believe that the system could not work, these students dragged out of the closet their picket signs and printed up their petitions and WERE GOING TO GET US OUT OF CAMBODIA!! They failed to realize that they had quite recently done the same thing (substitute the word VIETNAM for CAMBODIA) with zero results.

With the closing down of nearly all major colleges and universities in the country, the anti-war movement had achieved a great victory and apparently gained widespread support. Yet this victory and support are, at least at present, rather meaningless. For many of the self-proclaimed "leaders" of the movement seek only an end to the Indochina war, as if it were merely a tragic mistake which this "great" and "glorious" nation had made and not a significant and symbolic example of Amerikan capitalism at work. And they seek this change in policy through "peaceful" not revolutionary methods. They channel student anti-war sentiment down that dead-end road called "peaceful dissent" and denounce those who dare to suggest that there might be something wrong with the system.

It should be the task of all libertarians to convince this mass of anti-war people that the system is shit. In doing this, we must obviously come into conflict with those power-freaks who call themselves leaders and who offer nothing but defeat for the cause. It is our job to show the people the way to liberation, and that is not by means of the ballot-box and the peaceful demonstration, but instead, the gun and the bomb.

WASHINGTON, D.C. JULY 4, 1970

Rick Schneider

hardhats (waving flags): honor amerika=
love it or leave it

freaks (blowing dope): one two three four--
we don't want your fucking war...

11 am: 95 degrees and humid. Freaks liberate Reflecting Pool (some one calls it Nixon's cesspool--full of shit) and wade slowly toward the Billy Graham prayer orgy. Sparcely attended by the hardhat crowd. Freaks begin splashing, straights don't dig it. Pigs on horses threaten with gas, everyone splits;

High Afternoon: 20,000 freaks attend "SMOKE-IN" on Washington Monument Green. Takeover of food trucks provides showers of ice, coke, hot dog rolls and crackerjacks to lighten light hearts (and heads). Dig into the sun, trees and Grass---amerikan flag joint paper!!!! Straits wallow in the midday heat. Some look on with eager cameras & refuse joints that are offered them, but no hassle. Pigs are off eating slop.

Evening: Bob Dope claims 400,000 present (papers reduce figure...does that include freaks.. how many always show up for the fireworks?). Forget about the KateSmith-GlenCampbell BS Hour, but the fireworks are a real freakout, man. Freaks blow grass, but straights don't seem to mind. Trouble starts only when pigs start arresting and gassing. Just goes to show that no one really gives a damn what you do, so long as they're allowed to watch KateSmith and RedSkelton in peace.

"We are willing, at any moment, to negotiate a halt in the bombings with President Agnew's government..."

Abbie Hoffman

"Better living through chemistry." DuPont and Yippie! slogan.

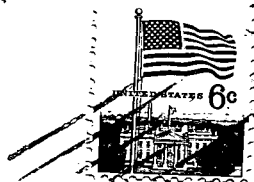
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"NEVER PREACH NON-VIOLENCE TO OPPRESSED PEOPLE." Mao Tse-tung

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ANARCHY